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15 March 1956

MEMORANDUM TO: MR. BISSKILL

THRU : Colonel Gibbs

SUBJECT : Visit to Watertown

1. I have just returned from a visit to Watertown and have found several situations that I feel should be brought to your attention. The personnel shortages in the Medical Department are still a major problem. We are near the point of deployment of Detachment "A", and at this time I have one doctor and one airman. The airman is an Aero-Medical technician and not a Physiology specialist, which is our field of greatest requirement. He has been in training to work in a dual capacity, however, he cannot be expected to attain the needed level of proficiency for at least another 6 to 8 weeks. The doctor is able, of course, to direct the activity, but he also cannot be expected to perform such duties as repairing microphones, seatpacks, et cetera. While it is expected that we will also have a manufacturer's technical representative with the detachment, the problem remains unchanged. Our many months of experience have shown that we must have at least two specialists to prepare one man for each mission.

2. I am considering sending one of our trained airmen [redacted] along with the initial group. He is soon to be discharged from service, however, and will be utilisable only for 60 to 90 days. I cannot use [redacted] for other than a very short time because he must be at the ranch to continue the training phase for Detachment B personnel.

3. During the earlier phases of the ranch operation, I have pointed out, as have others, that morale was at an extremely high peak in spite of many frustrations and unusual situations. Before my departure in February, it was becoming evident that morale was beginning to disintegrate, and this visit has pointed out that my suspicions were more than well founded. The factors involved in this change are several:

a. There is a constantly growing factionalism that is unhealthy. Personnel of the detachment feel that permanent party personnel do not understand their problems and are hindering their operation. The same is true in reverse. Each group

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in turn also makes every effort to enlist the support of visiting headquarters personnel in an effort to justify their own position.

b. We have two Commanders on the station of vastly different personalities. There is little or no common ground of understanding between them, and I feel that I am justified in saying that each fosters the factionalism. I also feel that this poor aspect of leadership is transmitted to their subordinates which is being reflected in their work.

c. Another point in morale is most difficult to explain, but as near as I can discover, it concerns the drivers and an over-paternalistic attitude on the part of the Detachment "A" Commander and Operations Officer. There is a poorly defined duty and off-duty period. The drivers repair to their living quarters when not flying or when not involved in mission planning. However, the two persons mentioned literally never leave them alone, and constantly drop in to "discuss" things with them. The drivers feel that they are almost being smothered upon; and in private conversation with [redacted] this is actually the case. They actually discuss the drivers as if they were kids and feel that they should supervise even to the minute when these men should be in bed, etc.

4. I have no solution to the problems I have advanced; however, I feel they are of sufficient importance to warrant further consideration.

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Lt. Colonel USAF (MC)

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